

591 longer time--a situation that has brought many difficulties for everyone involved.

162 Wars have contributed to the predominance of the female population. While in 1938 there were 1047 females for every 1000 males, in 1944 the figure had risen to 1092. There were about 30,000 or 8-9 per thousand new marriages in 1939, but immediately after the war the figure rose to 50,000 or 11-13 per thousand a year. Now it is approximately on the pre-war level; in 1951 32,143 new marriages (7.9 per thousand) took place. The severe housing shortage and difficult economic conditions have greatly contributed to a rise in the average age for marriage. Today it is around twenty-five, somewhat more for men and somewhat less for women, while the legal age is eighteen for men and seventeen for women.

- 362 *Another problem created by the war was the shortage of housing. This difficulty still remains unsettled, especially in the major cities where the population has sharply increased. People moving in from the country have been forced to live in air raid shelters and other temporary lodgings, and many young couples have had to delay their marriage because of their inability to find a place to live.*

Recently the situation has improved as new houses have been built with the help of government loans, but it has not yet reached the pre-war standards. In 1950 the housing situation in Finland in terms of the percentage of the population living in extremely crowded conditions was estimated as follows:

	<u>Cities</u>	<u>Rural areas</u>
1-2 persons per room	77.3 per cent	74.3 per cent

362 More than 2
persons per
room 22.7 per cent 25.7 per cent

The percentage of 1-2 persons per room was lower than in any other West European country, but higher than in eastern or southern Europe.

In rural areas the housing situation improved much during the time of Finland's independence. When in 1901 the ratio of freehold dwellings was 45 per cent, by 1937 it had risen to 88 per cent. About 20 per cent of these dwellings had only one room, 35 per cent 2 rooms, 18 per cent 3 rooms, 20 per cent 4-5 rooms, and 7 per cent 6 rooms or more. The houses, as a rule, are

372 very well built and heated. The consumption of firewood in Finland is relatively greater than in any other country in the world. In view of the fact that no other fuel is available--except for peat, which is not used at all for heating--and